Introduction

Alcohol and substance misuse is becoming a key strategic issue for local authorities as emerging statistics reveal the true extent of its consequences on health, the urban environment, crime and Antisocial Behaviour.

Nationally...

• The estimated health service cost in Wales of alcohol related chronic disease and alcohol related incidents is **between £70 million and £85 million** each year.

• The health service cost in Wales of problem drug use has been estimated at **£17.6 million per year**.

• The economic and social cost of alcohol and Class A drug misuse in Wales is estimated to be as much as **£2 billion each year**.

• **1000 People in Wales die** from causes attributed to alcohol every year.

• Each year **8500 males and 4500 females** are admitted to hospitals in Wales with alcohol related complaints.

Within Cardiff...

• **46% of adults in Cardiff reported drinking alcohol above recommended guidelines** ‘on at least one day in the past week’.

• **24% of adults in Cardiff are smokers**

• **72% of all crimes relating to Violence Against the Person in the city centre occur between the hours of 6pm and 6am**

• **37.8% of those offences occur during that time on Saturday night and Sunday morning**.

• In 2011, **2676 people attended A&E with alcohol related problems. 60% of that figure attended between the hours of 6pm and 6am**.

• **27.8% of attendees did so on Saturday night / Sunday morning**.

• **28 people were treated in A&E in Cardiff for wounds caused by glass or a bottle in the first 6 months of the year**.

• In the first 7 months of this year, **4,346 domestic abuse incidents were recorded by South Wales Police for Cardiff**. Of those, **891 were repeat incidents** within 3 months of the first incident. Whilst no direct links can be inferred, it is strongly suspected that substance abuse is a significant catalyst for such incidents.

In recognition of these growing concerns organisations, individuals and partners have undertaken a series of interventions to tackle the issue of alcohol and substance misuse. **This paper is intended to give a short overview of what is currently happening in Cardiff**, and what has happened in the past, to address the problem.
1. ALCOHOL RECOVERY UNIT

ISSUE:

As the reputation of Cardiff’s Night Time Economy has grown, more people have been visiting the city centre to enjoy the nightlife. This has put a strain on local communities and services that have to deal with the consequences of excessive levels of intoxication.

WHAT HAPPENED:

The pilot began on 15th September, initially running on a Wednesday and Saturday night in Ebenezer Chapel on Charles Street. The Unit is open between the hours of 8pm to 8am. After seeing low levels of activity on Wednesday nights it was decided to provide the service on Friday nights instead as this was perceived as the second busiest night of the week.

The Unit created an immediate place of safety in the City Centre for people who are drunk and aims to reduce the impact on emergency services. It operates as a medical base for the assessment and treatment of minor alcohol related injuries, where intravenous fluids can be given and people are allowed to sleep off the effects of excessive alcohol consumption in a safe environment.

In addition to reducing harm, several other initiatives are offered at the Alcohol Referral Centre and these include activities to challenge the behaviour of individuals when they have sobered up whilst offering them further help if required.

Partners Involved: Cardiff & Vale UHB Emergency Unit | Cardiff Council | South Wales Police | St John’s Ambulance | Welsh Ambulance Service Trust | Street Pastors | LA City Centre Team | Community Pay Back Team

SUCCESS / LESSONS:

• Since the official opening of the Unit on 22nd September the Alcohol Recovery Unit has handled over 250 attendees.

• Naturally this has reduced the pressure on A&E staff during busy periods and positively impacted the cost of delivering services.

• Similarly by removing intoxicated individuals from an environment where they could otherwise engage in ASB it has reduced pressure on policing and street pastors in the city centre.

• Part of the intervention also included recording the attendees in their intoxicated state to demonstrate their behaviour to them in the morning when they were more sober, however due to funding restrictions this has not continued.

• Cardiff University have been commissioned to evaluate the cost and benefits of the Alcohol Treatment Centre and will report on findings following the pilot period. This will provide a more detailed breakdown of the benefits and outcomes achieved.
2. CARDIFF AFTER DARK & OPERATION MISTLETOE

ISSUE:
The city centre’s night time economy that has grown substantially over recent years which has brought with it higher levels of anti social / criminal behaviour and greater demand on local services. The surge in footfall across the city centre over the festive period exacerbates these issues even further and increases the pressure on local services.

Incidents of violence, littering (particularly dangerous broken glass), public urination and other ASB all increase over the period.

WHAT HAPPENED:

Between 5\textsuperscript{th} & 24\textsuperscript{th} December a joint operation between Cardiff Council and South Wales Police was conducted to tackle and reduce the drink related criminal behaviour (Operation Mistletoe). Some of the key interventions included:

- Addressing the large amount of violent behaviour at taxi ranks by introducing Taxi Marshalls / Ambassadors to facilitate a more controlled environment for late night revellers looking to find a taxi.
- Issuing plastic cups in the place of glasses to minimise the use of glass as a weapon in violent incidents
- Supplying additional bins on event days to minimise the amount of litter in the street, (particularly broken glass) which is known to cause a large amount of foot injuries and additional pressure on A&E services in the city.
- Increased numbers of Community Payback participants on litter clearing duties.
- Visiting food outlets during the weeks running up to the period to remind them of their waste disposal obligations and the consequences of falling foul of them.
- Providing temporary urinals in the city to reduce incidents of public urinating.
- Increasing the number of Street Pastors to hand out bottled water, space blankets and sandals to people wearing high heels to avoid foot injuries from walking home barefooted.

**Partners Involved:** South Wales Police | Cardiff Council | Wales Probation Community Payback | St John’s Ambulance | UHW | Street Pastors | Cardiff City Centre Management
SUCCESS / LESSONS:

The project achieved:

- Cleaner streets reported by street cleansing teams as a result of the increased amount of bins
- Significant improvement in incidents of public urination (evidenced by keyword search of Police Database)
- Lower levels of broken glass in the environment had positive impacts on local accident and emergency services: There were fewer treatments of foot injuries (from walking barefooted over broken glass) and fewer injuries treated following assaults using glass.
- The chart below (produced by Police Headquarters Business Unit) show a 23% year on year fall in the incidents of serious violence against the person as recorded from 2007. The projections for the current financial year suggest that this trend will continue.
3. DOMESTIC ABUSE: OPERATION ABIGOR/ 6 NATIONS

ISSUE:

Domestic Abuse is a key priority for authorities across Wales and the Welsh Government has made clear that any type of abuse must not be tolerated and that perpetrators must be held accountable. Its definition has been widened from “Domestic Violence” in order to encapsulate abuse related to psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse. And this definition will be enhanced further in March 2013.

It has long been identified that domestic abuse is amplified in Wales during international rugby tournaments, in particular the 6 Nations: Historically during these periods, incidents of domestic abuse have increased as international rugby fixtures lead to increased levels of alcohol consumption across the country. This issue is further illustrated by a significant drop in incidents on weekends in the middle of the competition when there are no matches. (Recorded incidents dropped in number from 5 on a match weekend to 1 on the following weekend when no match was played).

Partners involved in addressing domestic abuse were faced with two priorities; to improve awareness, reporting and the detection of abuse and secondly through the increased awareness campaign, to reduce occurrences of incidents that fall under domestic abuse.

WHAT HAPPENED:

- A press release was launched in the South Wales Echo promoting Operation Abigor, which commenced in February 2012. The campaign advised readers of the initiative during the RBS six nations, and that a dedicated team would be taking positive action against domestic violence/ abuse.
- Under reporting of domestic abuse is regarded as a significant issue. In 2012, six domestic abuse incidents were recorded as a crime, compared to zero in 2010 and 2011.
- In 2012 a 83.3% detection rate was achieved for all recorded DA crimes during the Match day weekends illustrating the importance of encouraging reporting.

Partners Involved: South Wales Police | Welsh Government | Welsh Women’s Aid | Cardiff Council

SUCCESS/ LESSONS:

- During the RBS six Nations weekends in 2012 there was a 38.8% reduction of DA incidents compared to 2010 and a 41% reduction compared to 2011.
- The reduction in incidents was attributed to the continued work to reduce DA, and the press release prior to operation Abigor.
4. CARDIFF STAY SAFE

ISSUE:
Many young people under the age of 18 congregate the city centre to take advantage of the night time economy to socialise. Despite being unable to legitimately access licensed premises, the city centre presents an environment where young people can consume alcohol and other illicit substances that they have already acquired without being detected amongst other night time revellers. An added issue is the fact that a lot of these people are from outside Cardiff and have no means of returning home late at night, they have little knowledge of the surrounding area and their inherent risks and are not in the right condition to be able to look after each other.

This group expose themselves to considerable risks including:
- Robbery
- Assault related injuries
- Girls in particular become vulnerable targets
- Health risks of intoxication

Due to the fact that they seek out places where they are least likely to be disturbed it is particularly difficult to engage with these groups.

WHAT HAPPENED:
For the last 2 years the Cardiff Youth Offending service and South Wales Police have run the Cardiff Stay Safe project by utilising intelligence from various sources to target places and times where young people are at risk from harm.

Using information from the University Hospital Wales, Police, Street Pastors, Victim Support and the Youth Service, interventions were put in place to assist young people at risk from alcohol or substance misuse. Most of the work focused on the city centre or on events such as Halloween, Winter Wonderland, GCSE result night and Mardi Gras.

The project provides an alternative to the police’s power to remove a child under 18 years. As part of the project the young people are taken to a place of safety, reducing the risk for further harm, and are encouraged to discuss their decisions. Parents are then contacted and are encouraged to talk with their child about alcohol and risk. None of the young people are criminalised and all are offered follow on support where needed.

Between July 2011 and June 2012 15 separate initiatives were held and approximately 3000 young people were engaged with. 89 young people were detained by the police and brought to designated safe places (of those 89, over 50% of the people were from outside Cardiff). There were a number of reasons cited by the people for being in the City Centre, mostly:
- Consumption/possession of alcohol or small amounts of cannabis
- Possession of fireworks
- Involved in committing ASB or to commit a pre-empted crime

Partners Involved: Cardiff Youth Offending Service | South Wales Police | Street Pastors | UHW | Victim Support | Youth Services
SUCCESS / LESSONS:
The project has successfully engaged professionals across a number of agencies including health, youth services and the police. A group of previously unidentified vulnerable youngsters in and around Cardiff are being helped, for the first time. Stay Safe also encourages data sharing across agencies. In so doing, Stay Safe further encourages integration across agencies which is necessary to address the many facets of a complex issue. This project is currently funded up until March 2013.

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  o Possession of fireworks
  o Involved in committing ASB
  o To commit a pre-empted crime

• On Mardi Gras Sept 2012 12 young people were detained – most of whom were sick through alcohol. All of these young people would have gone to UHW had they not been removed from the area and take them to safety.

• The local health board has identified that on dates StaySafe is running there is a reduction in admission to the A&E departments for alcohol consumption and victims of assault. The use of StaySafe powers also reduces 1st time entrants into the Criminal Justice System, again reducing costs especially around custody suites.
5. IT ONLY TAKES ONE / PRO-MO CYMRU

ISSUE:
Following a spate of cases across the UK where young people were killed in incidents of alcohol fuelled violence the ‘one punch could kill’ campaign was launched. Pro-Mo Cymru, a Cooperative Development Association based in Cardiff, expanded on this idea to raise awareness of the dangers people under 25 expose themselves to whilst intoxicated. Topics included violence and abuse, but also covered wider issues such as irresponsible / damaging behaviour that might not come under the umbrella of Anti Social Behaviour.

WHAT HAPPENED:
The ‘It Only Takes One’ campaign was launched in Cardiff over the festive period in 2011 to draw attention to alcohol related violent crime. Statistically, males under 25 are the most likely to engage in and suffer from this type of crime so the student community was targeted with branded beer mats, bottle openers, pens and other material such as posters in University buildings. Blog posts and youth magazine articles were circulated to publicise the project.

In 2010 ProMo-Cymru worked with the Cardiff Substance Misuse Action Team (SMAT), members from key substance misuse agencies in Cardiff and a young person steering group to create a local, interactive drugs and alcohol information website for under 18s (www.red-button.org). The aim of the site was to provide, up to date, non-bias, youth friendly content in a variety of formats.

Partners Involved: Pro-Mo Cymru | Ifanc | Cardiff Children & Young People’s partnership

SUCCESS / LESSONS:
Whilst no quantitative data is readily available to measure its success the websites administered by the ProMo – Cymru team have revealed since its launch in December 2011 to October this year the site has received 4392 visits. A dramatic spike in visits followed a marketing campaign reflects the level of interest and engagement with the project.